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Alfred Tennyson

BIOGRAPHY AND SELECTIONS
FROM HIS WRITINGS

WRITTEN ESPECIALLY

FOR SCHOOL READING

BY
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ALFRED TENNYSON.

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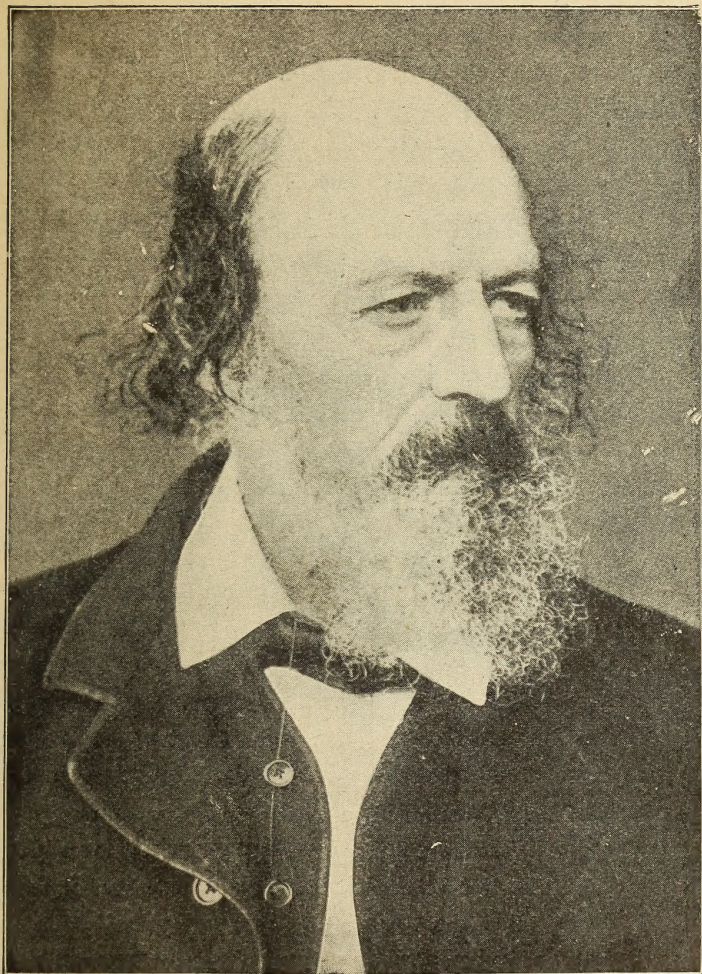
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ALFRED TENNYSON.

1809—1892.



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It is often said that great poets are born, not made, and it is certainly true that Alfred Tennyson was born a poet. To the end of his life he loved the little rectory at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, where he was born on August 6, 1809. The woodbine over the bay window of his nursery, the lawn covered with larch and elm and sycamore trees, and the little brook near by haunted him through life. It was a sweet, quiet, happy place, an ideal spot for a poet to be born. Tennyson was the fourth of twelve children, eight sons and four daughters, all of whom, except two, lived to be more than seventy years old. His father, Doctor George Clayton Tennyson, was rector of Somersby, and of other small parishes near by. He was a man of more than average ability and a good scholar. He did many things well: wrote poetry, and painted pictures, and was something of an architect and a musician. His mother was Elizabeth, daughter of the Reverend Stephen Fytche. She is described as a woman of very admirable qualities. She was a very pious woman, and remarkably sensitive. Tennyson never liked glaring publicity, and it is said that he inherited his

refined and shrinking disposition from his mother.

The Tennyson children seem to have made their early home a happy one with their imaginative amusements. They were knights, and had mock tournaments, and played at being kings and queens. And then they wrote tales and put them under the dishes on the dinner table to be read when the meal was over. Tennyson often entertained his younger brothers and sisters, even when he was a mere child himself, with tales of Indians and demons and witches. The brothers and sisters sometimes acted a play, and Tennyson did his part so well that his parents thought he might turn out to be an actor.

At the age of seven, to the question, "Will you go to sea or to school?" Tennyson answered, "To school." He thought it would be a happy place, as most boys do; but in those days it was not. He went to stay at the home of his grandmother at Louth, and entered the grammar school there. About all he learned in this school was endurance, for the master, the Rev. J. Waite, believed in thrashing the boys, and the big boys believed in cuffing the little ones. When Tennyson was an old man, the Louth school had a holiday in his honor, which pleased him very much, but his son tells us that he said, "How I did hate that school. The only good I ever got from it was the memory of the words,

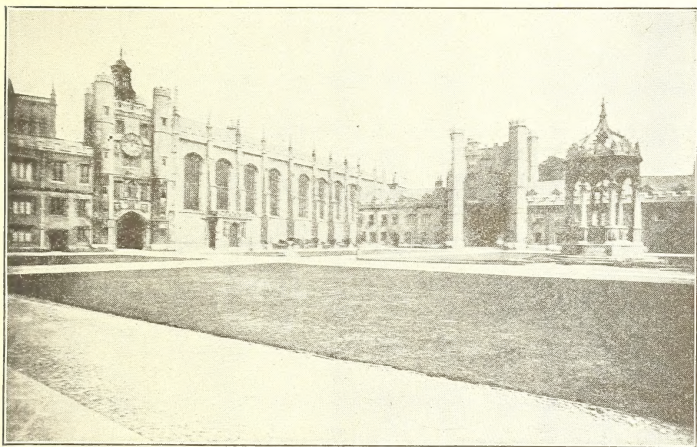
‘*Sonus desilientis aquae,*’ and of an old wall covered with wild weeds opposite the school windows.” But Tennyson’s school experience was short; he left Louth in 1820 and went home to be trained by his father.

Here he was left very much to his own resources, to ramble in the woods and pastures about Somersby, or to read in his father’s library. Among the authors that he read as he chose were Shakespeare, Milton, Burke, Goldsmith, Rabelais, Sir William Jones, Addison, Swift, Cervantes, Bunyan, and Buffon. All that Tennyson learned of the languages, of the fine arts, of mathematics, and of natural science, was taught him by his father, who was at times very stern and exacting with his boys.

Tennyson’s very earliest attempts at poetry were made when he was about eight years old, and at the age of ten or eleven he wrote many lines after the style of Pope’s *Homer’s Iliad*. At the age of twelve he wrote an epic of six thousand lines which made his father believe that he was to be a great poet. His first published work was in the little volume of *Poems by Two Brothers*, which he wrote together with his brother Charles. His brother was between sixteen and eighteen, and Alfred was between fifteen and seventeen when the poems were written. The book was published by Jackson of Louth, and the young poets received for it the sum of twenty pounds, a part of which had to

be taken in books. On the afternoon of the publication it is said that Alfred and Charles hired a carriage with some of their money and drove away to the seashore to enjoy the day.

In 1828 Tennyson with his brother Charles entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Their elder brother Frederick had already made a name for himself at Cambridge. At this time Tennyson is described as "six feet high, broad chested,



TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

strong-limbed, his face Shakespearian, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned with dark wavy hair, his head finely poised, his hand the admiration of sculptors, long fingers with square tips, soft as a child's, but of great size and strength. What struck one most about him was the union of strength with refinement."

Tennyson had spent so much of his youth at home, and knew so little of school life, that he found himself at first lonesome and ill at ease in college. In a letter to his aunt, Mrs. Russell, he complains about being lonesome, and says that the college life is uninteresting and monotonous. But his natural shyness and reserve wore away, and his warmth of heart and poetic nature soon made him many friends. He became a member of a society called the "Apostles," a group of young men who met regularly to discuss literature, politics, history, and the philosophy of life. Among Tennyson's college friends were Archbishop Trench, Lord Houghton, Dean Alford, Dean Blakesly, Dean Merivale, J. M. Kemble, Charles Buller, and R. Monteith. But the one man who influenced Tennyson most strongly was Arthur Henry Hallam. They were bosom friends until the untimely death of Hallam in 1833, and the memory of that friendship formed the basis of what is sometimes called Tennyson's greatest poem, *In Memoriam*. In the memoir of his father, Tennyson's son says: "Arthur Hallam's enthusiasm was worthy of his true and unselfish friendship, and helped my father through the years of darkness and discouragement that were soon to come." In June, 1829, Tennyson won the prize medal for his poem in blank verse on "Timbuctoo." Tennyson did not take a degree at Cambridge, but before he left college in 1831 his first volume, *Poems*,

Chiefly Lyrical, was published. This little volume was received very cordially for the work of a young poet, and gave promise of his future greatness. Two of the most notable poems in the volume were Mariana, and the Arabian Nights. And in 1832 he came out with another volume which contained some of the best poems that he ever wrote, Mariana in the South, the Lady of Shalott, and the Palace of Art.

Shortly after leaving Cambridge, with Hallam, Tennyson made a trip to the Pyrenees where they had some secret meeting with the Spanish refugees under Torrijos, who were plotting against the Spanish government. This trip to France improved his health, and gave him the inspiration for some of his future poems. On his return he went to the Somersby Rectory to make his home again. His father died in 1831, but the family continued to live at the Somersby Rectory until 1837. He studied hard during these years. The Tennysons did not have much money at this time, and Alfred did not travel as much as he would have liked to do. He made frequent visits to the Lincolnshire coast, and to London, however, and took one journey up the Rhine to Cologne and Bonn.

In September, 1833, came the great sorrow of Tennyson's life. Arthur Hallam was traveling with his father and died of apoplexy at Vienna, on September 15, 1833. It was a great blow to the whole Tennyson family, for Hallam was

engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. Hallam's last letter to Tennyson was dated a week before his death. Tennyson's grief was almost overpowering. Life seemed hardly worth while without his friend. A few days after Hallam's funeral Tennyson noted down some lines which were the beginning of *In Memoriam*.

“Where is the voice I loved? Ah, where
Is that dear hand that I would press?
Lo! The broad heavens cold and bare,
The stars that know not my distress.”

About this time also he began the poem, *The Two Voices*, which deals with the despair of a man who thinks the world is empty for him.

In 1837 the Tennysons left their pleasant home at Somersby, and went to live at High Beech in Epping Forest where they remained until 1840. They next moved to Tunbridge Wells, and finally, in 1841, to Boxley near Maidstone.

During these years Tennyson remembered keenly the criticism of his earlier poems, and busied himself in revising some of them, and in writing others, but published nothing further until 1842. In this year his poems were issued in two volumes. Some of the earlier poems were included, and many new ones. Among the new poems were *The Gardener's Daughter*, *The Talking Oak*, *Locksley Hall*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Ulysses*, *St. Agnes' Eve*, *The Vision of Sin*, and *Break, Break*. These volumes established his

reputation as a great poet, and showed the wonderful development of his mind in the years that he had been working but not publishing. One critic said of him at this time: "The decade during which Mr. Tennyson has remained silent has wrought a great improvement. The handling of his later pieces is much lighter and freer; the interest deeper and purer; there is more humanity with less image and drapery; a closer adherence to truth; a greater reliance for effect upon the simplicity of nature."

In 1845, owing to the efforts of Arthur Hallam's father, Thomas Carlyle, and others, Sir Robert Peel obtained a pension of two hundred pounds annually for Tennyson as "A mark of royal favor to one who had devoted to worthy objects great intellectual powers." Tennyson did not refuse the pension, for he needed money, but he said in a letter to a friend, "Something in that word 'pension' sticks in my gizzard: it is only the name and perhaps would 'smell sweeter' by some other." He was enabled by this pension to make a tour to Switzerland in 1846.

Tennyson's great poem, *The Princess*, was published in 1847. It is his first long narrative poem, and is especially interesting because it shows Tennyson's attitude toward woman and her sphere. He once said: "I would pluck my hand from a man, even if he were my greatest hero, or dearest friend, if he wronged a woman, or told her a lie." Some of the songs in *The*

Princess, the most beautiful in the English language, were added in later editions.

From 1846 to 1850 the Tennysons lived at Cheltenham, Bellevue House in St. James Square, and Tennyson spent much of the time with his mother, to whom he was always very much devoted. The year 1850 has been called his golden year. In *Memoriam* was published in this year. It is his longest and most elaborate poem, and it is a monument to the memory of his friend, Arthur Hallam. Tennyson had been working on the poem seventeen years, and Gladstone said of it in a review: "Mr. Tennyson gave to the world under the title of *In Memoriam* perhaps the richest oblation ever offered by the affection of friendship at the tomb of the departed. * * * But what can be a nobler tribute than this, that for seventeen years after his death, a poet fast rising toward the lofty summits of his art, still found that young fading image the richest source of his inspiration, and of thoughts that gave him buoyancy for a flight such as he had not hitherto attained."

It was fitting that the month which saw the publication of *In Memoriam* should also witness the marriage of Tennyson to the woman he loved and to whom he had been engaged for a number of years. Tennyson first met Emily Sellwood in 1836 when her sister Louise was married to his brother Charles. They soon after became engaged, but Tennyson was not

able to marry, and it was not until he was insured a yearly royalty from the publication of *In Memoriam* that he felt justified in marrying. His marriage was most fortunate, for Mrs. Tennyson, who outlived her husband, proved to be a great help to him through the remainder of his life. When an old man he said: "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her." On their wedding journey they visited Arthur Hallam's grave at Clevedon. Their first fixed home was at Chapel House, Twickenham, where in 1851 their first child, a boy, died in infancy. Two other children were born to them, Hallam and Lionel.

Tennyson's golden year was made complete when, on November 19, 1850, he was appointed Poet Laureate to succeed Wordsworth. This appointment came about mainly on account of Prince Albert's admiration for *In Memoriam*. It was a great honor, and yet Tennyson hesitated about taking it. He wrote two letters, one accepting the position, and the other refusing it, but finally sent the first one. Tennyson had known and respected Wordsworth as a great poet, and he perhaps hesitated to follow him as Laureate. Indeed, it was Tennyson's good fortune throughout his life to know intimately the leading literary men of the time. Gladstone, Carlyle, Browning, Dickens, and Thackeray were among his friends.

On November 25, 1853, Tennyson moved with

his family to Farringford in the Isle of Wight, which was to be his home for the next forty years. He now had an income of five hundred pounds a year from his poems, and he was able gradually to pay for his home. It was a beautiful place, within sight and sound of the sea, and yet it had a quietness and seclusion about it that the poet loved. In the Memoir his son says: "There he worked, morning and evening, at Maud, sitting in his high-backed, wooden chair in a little room at the top of the house and smoking the sacred pipes during certain half hours of strict seclusion when his best thoughts came to him." The poem referred to was his first work of note at Farringford, and was published first in 1855. It is one of his strongest and most striking poems. It is a poem of love, and Tennyson delighted to read it aloud to his friends. Gladstone said that he never appreciated the poem until he heard Tennyson read it.

The next three or four years after the publication of the volume containing *Maud*, Tennyson spent in traveling and in completing his *Idylls of the King*. He had been working on parts of this long poem for more than twenty years. Two of the *Idylls* were published in 1857, and the first four were published in 1859: *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. The other *Idylls* are *Gareth and Lynette*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pellás* and *Ettarre*, and the *Last Tournament*. Tenny-

son offered the Idylls as a tribute to the Queen :

“But thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but thro’ thy living love
For one to whom I made it o’er the grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing sense at war with soul,
Ideal manhood closed in real man,
Rather than that gray King, whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still—”

The Idylls were received with praise everywhere, and Tennyson received personal letters of congratulation from the Duke of Argyll, Thackeray, Clough, Jewett, Kingsley, Prince Albert, and many others.

The next notable poem was *Enoch Arden* which was finished in 1864. It is almost entirely different from the Idylls of the King in style and in subject matter. Sixty thousand copies were sold in a very short time, and by this poem Tennyson endeared himself to the common people of England. He was now loved and honored by all classes of people, high and low, and Queen Victoria showed him special favor. The Queen once asked Tennyson what she could do for him, and he said: “Nothing, madam, but shake my two boys by the hand. It may keep them loyal in the troublous times to come.” Soon afterward the Queen invited the family to the royal palace and received them very cordially.

The record of the latter part of Tennyson’s life is even simpler and quieter than the first.

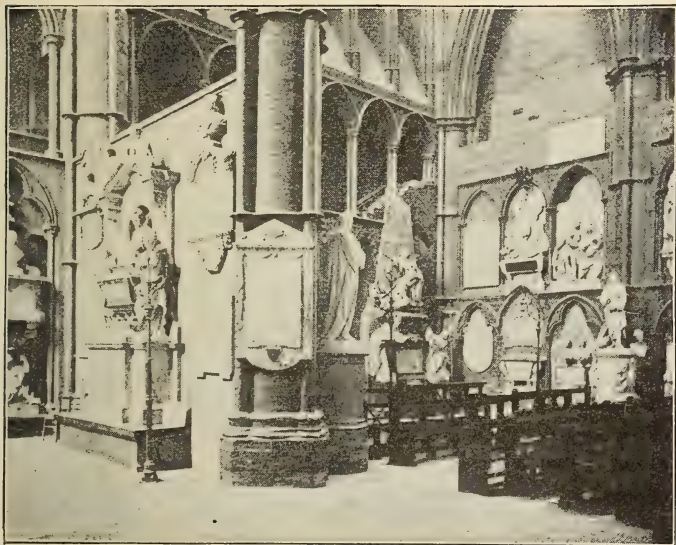
In 1867 he negotiated for the land on Blackdown in Surrey where he later built another home which was called Aldworth. The Tennysons then lived alternately at Farringford and at Aldworth. For a number of years also the Tennysons took a house in London for a while, as Tennyson said, "to rub our country rust off." They spent Christmas at Farringford, and went to London in February to stay until after Easter. In 1873 he was made an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and was offered a baronetcy in 1873 through Gladstone, and in 1874 through Disraeli, but he declined each time. In 1875 Tennyson brought out his play of Queen Mary. Other plays later were Harold, Becket, The Promise of May, The Falcon, The Cup, and The Foresters.

In 1880 Tennyson was offered the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University, which he declined. In 1883 Queen Victoria offered Tennyson a peerage, and after some hesitation he accepted it. He took his seat in the House of Lords on March 11, 1884, and in the same year voted for the Franchise Bill.

About this time Tennyson's poems were attracting a great deal of attention in America, and some school children in Brooklyn, New York, sent him a little volume of his own verses copied out in their own hand with the inscription: "To Alfred Tennyson, from his young friends in Public School No. 9, Brooklyn, New York, U.

S. A." This pleased Tennyson very much, and he replied very kindly to the children. Among his friends and admirers in America were Oliver Wendell Holmes, Walt Whitman, Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe, and Emerson.

The greatest sorrow in Tennyson's life after the death of Hallam came in 1886 in the death



POET'S CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

of his son Lionel. Lionel Tennyson was connected with the India Office, and while visiting in India caught jungle-fever, and died and was buried at sea, while on the voyage home.

Some of Tennyson's later poems are Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, Forlorn, The Leper's

Bride, The Ring, The Death of Oenone, and Abkar's Dream. In his eighty-first year he wrote Crossing the Bar, one of the sweetest, deepest little lyrics in the English language. He felt that that little poem in a way completed his life's work, and wished it always to stand at the end of his published works.

Death came to him quietly at Aldworth on the night of October 6, 1892. A few hours before his death he lay with his hand resting on a copy of Shakespeare unable to read. He was buried at Westminster Abbey on October 12, 1892. The whole nation mourned his death, and no one person outside of his own family more keenly or sincerely than Queen Victoria.

His was a poet's life from the beginning to the end. He lived quietly, and enjoyed modestly the fame which came to him. His mind was broad, and his character strong. No other writer of his time perhaps touched so closely the life of the nineteenth century in his writings. He saw with a prophetic eye through the problems of religion and politics, and philosophy of the century, and in much that he wrote set down the very spirit of the century. He reached a greater age than any other poet of his century, and his power did not weaken. He was happy in his home life, and blessed with many friends. There was a harmony, and smoothness, and sweetness about his life that found expression in his poetry. The mere workmanship of his poems is exquisite, and he brought a dignity and earnestness to his art that is almost without parallel. He sung sweetly, and he sung to all classes of people, and his songs will live with the language that clothes them.

SELECTIONS FROM TENNYSON.

SONG OF THE BROOK.

I.

I come from haunts* of coot and hern*,
I make a sudden* sally
And sparkle* out among the fern,
To bicker* down a valley*.

II.

By thirty hills I hurry* down,
Or slip* between the ridges,
By twenty thorps*, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

III.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow*
To join* the brimming* river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever*.

IV.

I chatter* over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles*,
I bubble* into eddyng* bays,
I babble* on the pebbles*.

V.

With many a curve* my banks I fret*
By many a field and fallow*,
And many a fairy foreland* set
With willow-weed and mallow*.

VI.

I chatter, chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

VII.

I wind* about, and in and out,
With here a blossom* sailing,
And here and there a lusty* trout
And here and there a grayling*.

VIII.

And here and there a foamy* flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak*
Above the golden gravel*.

IX.

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

X.

I steal* by lawns and grassy plots*,
I slide by hazel* covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy* lovers.

XI.

I slip, I slide, I gloom*, I glance*,
Among my skimming* swallows,
I make the netted* sunbeam dance*
Against my sandy shallows*.

XII.

I murmur* under moon and stars
In brambly* wildernesses;
I linger* to my shingly* bars*;
I loiter* round my cresses*;

XIII.

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

SUGGESTIVE EXERCISES ON ABOVE SELECTION.

1. Read the poem carefully and thoughtfully.
2. Why is this called the "Song of the Brook?"
3. What is a brook? How does a brook differ from a river?
4. What is represented as being the speaker in this poem? What is personification?
5. What picture would be suitable to represent the imagery of the first stanza?
6. What picture would represent the imagery of the third stanza?
7. Describe pictures that would represent the imagery of other stanzas.
8. What animals are named in this poem? Get what information you can about each one by referring to the dictionary, cyclopedia, and zoology, and show how its habits connect it with the brook.
9. What plants are named in this poem? Where do these plants grow?
10. Could Mr. Tennyson have written this beautiful

little poem, if he had not known something of the habits of animals and plants?

11. How many stanzas in this poem? How many verses in each stanza?

12. Which verses of each stanza rhyme? What is rhyme?

13. Make a list of the words that rhyme and tell in each case whether the rhyme is perfect or imperfect, single or double?

14. Why are certain verses of each stanza indented?

15. How many syllables in the first verse of each stanza? Which syllables are accented?

16. Ditto, the second verse of each stanza?

17. Ditto, the third verse of each stanza?

18. Ditto, the fourth verse of each stanza?

19. Define all the words that are marked with stars or give synonyms for them.

20. Write a paraphrase of the poem.

21. Be prepared to give the meaning, not only of any word used in the poem, but the full meaning of any phrase or sentence.

22. Make a list of the different things that the brook says it does; as, "I chatter, I bubble, I babble, I fret, I wind," etc.

23. What words in this poem end in "en?" Is the "e" silent or sounded?

24. What words in this poem end in "el?" Is the "e" silent or sounded?

25. Analyze the following derivative words: (*a*) Story, (*b*) foamy, (*c*) silvery, (*d*) grassy, (*e*) sandy, (*f*) brambly, (*g*) shingly.

26. When was Tennyson made poet laureate of England? What is a poet laureate?

27. Write a biographical sketch of Alfred Tennyson.

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

I.

Half a league*, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

“Forward*, the Light Brigade!
Charge* for the guns!” he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”
Was there a man dismayed*?
Not though the soldiers knew
Some one had blundered*.
Theirs not to make reply*,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them,
Volleyed* and thundered;
Stormed* at with shot and shell,
Boldly* they rode, and well;
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell,
Rode the six hundred.

IV.

Flashed all their sabers* bare,
Flashed as they turned in air,
Sab'ring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wondered:
Plunged* in the battery-smoke,
Right through the line they broke;
 Cossack and Russian
Reeled* from the saber-stroke,
 Shattered and sundered*.
Then they rode back, but not—
 Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
 Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero* fell,
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them—
 Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory* fade?
Oh, the wild charge they made!
 All the world wondered.

Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,—
Noble six hundred!

SUGGESTIVE EXERCISES ON ABOVE SELECTION.

“The Charge of the Light Brigade” is a popular poem, but to be appreciated the events on which it is founded must be known. Before they study the poem have your pupils carefully read the following extracts selected from reading books in which the poem is published:

1. About the middle of this century there was a terrible war between Russia, on one side, and England with her allies, on the other. It was known as the Crimean War. During a great battle at a place called Balaklava, a company of British soldiers known as the Light Brigade performed a deed of bravery almost equal to that of the Spartans at Thermopylæ. Through somebody’s mistake they received an order to charge upon a portion of the Russian army vastly larger than their own company, and protected by great batteries of artillery.

Although it seemed a rash and hopeless undertaking, they had received the order and felt that they must obey. With a battery in front and one on each side, they made a charge and routed the enemy; but it was a dear-bought victory. Out of six hundred and seventy horsemen, only one hundred and ninety-eight returned alive. It was about this charge that the poet Tennyson wrote the above poem.
—*Stepping Stones to Literature.*

2. “The Charge of the Light Brigade” was first printed in a London daily newspaper in December 1854, with a note by the author saying it was prompted by his “reading the first report of the *Times*’ correspondent, where only six hundred and seven sabres are mentioned as having taken part in the charge.” Balaklava, where the charge took place, was the British headquarters, in the

Crimean War, from September, 1854, to June, 1856; the charge itself was made October 25, 1854. From the military point of view it was an absurd and hopeless movement. The order which occasioned it was a blunder. Captain Nolan, on whom it fell to deliver the command, was the first man to die.

In the volume of 1855, the poem appeared considerably amended, but the changes were so criticised that the poet restored the lines more nearly to their original form. Moreover, he had a thousand copies of them printed in leaflet for distribution among the soldiers before Sebastopol; for he had heard how they liked the poem, and wanted them, as he said in a note printed with it, "to know that those who sit at home love and honor them."—*Masterpieces of British Literature*.

3. The above spirited poem commemorates a gallant and desperate charge made by a brigade of English light-horse on a Russian battery, at the battle of Balaklava (*bal-a-kla-va*), October 25, 1854. Six hundred and thirty started on the charge, and only a hundred and fifty returned. It has been supposed that the order to charge was given under a mistake.

Notice the *galloping* measure of the first two lines.—*New Franklin Fifth Reader*.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

By W. H. Russell, War Correspondent of the London Times.

1. The whole brigade scarcely made one effective regiment, according to the numbers of Continental armies, and yet it was more than we could spare. As they rushed toward the front, the Russians opened on them from the guns in the redoubt on the right, with volleys of musketry and rifles. They swept proudly past, glittering in the morning sun in all the pride and splendor of war.

2. We could scarcely believe the evidence of our senses! Surely that handful of men are not going to

charge an army in position! Alas! it was but too true. Their desperate valor knew no bounds, and far indeed was it removed from its so-called better part—discretion.

3. They advanced in two lines, quickening their pace as they closed toward the enemy. A more fearful spectacle was never witnessed than by those who beheld these heroes rushing to the arms of death. At the distance of twelve hundred yards the whole line of the enemy belched forth from thirty iron mouths a flood of smoke and flame, through which hissed the deadly balls. Their flight was marked by instant gaps in our ranks, by dead men and horses, by steeds flying wounded or riderless across the plain.

4. The first line is broken!—it is joined by the second!—they never halt, or check their speed an instant. With diminished ranks—thinned by those thirty guns, which the Russians had laid with the most deadly accuracy—with a halo of flashing steel above their heads, and with a cheer which was many a noble fellow's death-cry, they flew into the smoke of the batteries; but, ere they were lost from view, the plain was strewn with their bodies, and with the carcasses of horses.

5. They were exposed to an oblique fire from the batteries on the hills on both sides, as well as to a direct fire of musketry. Through the clouds of smoke we could see their sabers flashing as they rode up to the guns and dashed between them, cutting down the gunners as they stood.

6. To our delight we saw them returning after breaking through a column of Russian infantry, and scattering them like chaff, when the flank-fire of the battery on the hill swept them down, scattered and broken as they were. Wounded men and dismounted troopers flying toward us told the sad tale. Demigods could not have done what they had failed to do.

7. At the very moment when they were about to retreat, an enormous mass of lancers was hurled on their

flank. Colonel Shewell, of the Eighth Hussars, saw the danger, and rode his few men straight at them, cutting his way through with fearful loss. The other regiments turned, and engaged in a desperate encounter. With courage too great almost for credence, they were breaking their way through the columns which enveloped them, when there took place an act of atrocity without parallel in the modern warfare of civilized nations.

8. The Russian gunners, when the storm of cavalry passed, returned to their guns. They saw their own cavalry mingled with the troopers who had just ridden over them; and to the eternal disgrace of the Russian name, the miscreants poured a murderous volley of grape and canister on the mass of struggling men and horses, mingling friend and foe in one common ruin! It was as much as our heavy cavalry brigade could do to cover the retreat of the miserable remnants of the band of heroes as they returned to the place they had so lately quitted. At thirty-five minutes past eleven not a British soldier, except the dead and dying, was left in front of the Russian guns.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. After reading above accounts let pupils secure a map and locate the scene of the battle—Balaklava, on the Crimea in the Black Sea, about eight miles southeast of Sebastopol. It will be well also to read what is said in the cyclopedias about the town and the battle.

2. Read the poem carefully and thoughtfully.

3. Give the leading thoughts in good language.

4. What seems to have been the author's purpose in writing the poem?

5. Define or give synonyms for the words marked with stars.

6. Write a paraphrase of the poem.

7. Learn what you can about Alfred Tennyson and his writings.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear;

To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the
glad New-year;

Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest,
merriest day;

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but
none so bright as mine;

There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and
Caroline:

But none so fair as little Alice in all the land
they say,

So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall
never wake,

If you do not call me loud when the day begins
to break:

But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds
and garlands gay,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should
I see,

But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the
hazel tree?

He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave
him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all
in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash
of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what
they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can
never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what
is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad'll woo me any summer
day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the
green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made
the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'll come
from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its
wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint
sweet cuckoo flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in
swamps and hollows gray.
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the
-meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to bright-
en as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the
livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm
to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'll be fresh and green
and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all
the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'll merrily
glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me
early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the
glad New-year:

To-morrow 'll be of all the year the maddest,
merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

INTRODUCTION.

From ancient times the English have made much of the celebration of May Day, the name which they give to the first day of that month. To them it is the time of the coming of spring, a coming more tardy in that country than in this, and they make the day one of much hilarity. Special games are played, a pole is set up upon the green and the children, bedecked with flowers, dance around it gayly. They also choose one of their number who with certain ceremonies is crowned Queen of May Day, or as the poet says "Queen o' the May". It is for the children a day much looked forward to, and for the girl who is chosen May Queen it is a day of great happiness and honor.

We have ourselves some suggestion of the custom in this country in the May pole dance which is often seen, and in the practice among children in many neighborhoods of hanging May baskets filled with flowers, candy or other things.

PREPARATION.

Read the poem carefully and look up the meaning of unfamiliar words. Notice how the verses rhyme, and notice the character of the meter and whether or not it is irregular. If possible read the other two parts of the poem which tell of the young girl a year or more later. There is a good deal of real human nature revealed in this poem which the average boy or girl ought to appreciate.

I.

1. What is the meaning of "maddest" as here used?
2. Why do children usually think that their next pleasure is to be their greatest?

3. Why do you suppose she wanted to “get up early” on May Day?

II.

1. Do you think Alice was vain?
2. Why had she been chosen May Queen?

III.

1. Is it good for children to sleep so sound? Why?
2. What is meant by the break of day? In the spring daylight comes very early in England.
3. What was to be done with the flowers?

IV.

1. Who do you suppose Robin was?
2. What is a “hazel-tree?”
3. Do you think Alice was a kind girl?
4. Do you think it is possible for us to be concerned too much with our own happiness?

V.

1. Why is it unwise not to care what people say or think of us?
2. What is it to be “cruel-hearted”?

VI.

1. Do you think people ever do die of love?
2. How did Alice show that she was proud and unkind?
3. “Bold” here very likely means brave.

VII.

1. Older sisters do not always want the younger ones to go with them; why do you suppose Alice did?
2. Who are the “shepherd lads”?
3. For what were these farmer boys coming?

VIII.

1. What were the indications of spring?
2. Find out what you can about these flowers mentioned.

3. What do you think is the color of the marsh-marigold?

4. The English farms are often drained by open ditches, the "meadow trenches".

IX.

1. Why does Alice speak of the stars as "happy"?

2. How much does our own mood affect the appearance of things?

3. It rains much in England; why did she think there would be no rain?

X.

1. It was pure happiness that made the young girl see everything else so favorably.

XI.

1. The last stanza brings us back to the first, the stanzas between being but a development of what was first said.

2. What is your opinion of Alice?

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